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A LETTER

to the

TRUSTEES

of the

MANCHESTER INFIRMARY,

DISPENSARY,

LUNATIC HOSPITAL, & ASYLUM.

By James Jackson, M. D.

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TO THE

TRUSTEES

OF THE

MANCHESTER INFIRMARY, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

RECENT events, which have fallen out at the Infirmary, will occur to you as the occasion of this address. It is proper, however, to assure you, that with the rise and progress of those events I am altogether unacquainted. I have neither been informed of the accusations which have been preferred, nor of the means by which it was attempted to substantiate them. I have not seen, or received a detailed account of any of the memorials which have been presented; and, with the exception of a letter, bearing the signature of Mr.

Hutchinson, and the date of September 24th, which was accidently left for me in my absence, I have read none of the printed papers which have been circulated on either side. I am, therefore, incompetent to form an opinion concerning the decisions which have been past, or the steps which have been taken by any of the parties. And, on that account, this address is not to be considered as having originated in those transactions; nor are any allusions to them, which it may happen to contain, to be understood in any other than the most general acceptation. But I consider the present as a seasonable opportunity for calling your attention to the subject of those feuds, which are the opprobium and the bane of the Manchester Infirmary. — Four years ago, when I was appointed to be one of the physicians to it, I found it all in an uproar; and from that hour to the present, the embers of dissention have never ceased to smoke, and upon several occasions, have burst forth into a blaze. — It might be possible for me to ad-

here to that line of conduct which I have prescribed to myself, for the three years last past; to stand afar off from the raging commotions, and contemplate them with submissive calmness, and patient regret. But it is painful to observe an institution, whose foundations were laid in love and benevolence, perpetually distracted with discord and wrath: and a connection with an institution, however slight, creates an interest in its welfare, which prompts, even in the midst of discouragement, to seek its peace and prosperity. I therefore presume, in compliance with what I conceive to be the dictates of duty, to lay before you, what appear to me, to be the principal causes of those animosities. That I shall obtain the assent of all your members, and especially of those who have most influence in your councils, is much more than I expect: but if I can only provoke inquiry, so that the evils may be fairly traced to their source, and measures adopted which are adequate to remove them, I shall enjoy the satisfaction of having gained my object.

The fountain from which all the mischief appears originally to issue, is that separation which is established betwixt the board and the faculty. They are formed, by the rules, into perfectly distinct bodies of men; precluded from all proper intercourse with each other.

At first view, it might be thought, that the medical, and what may be called the secular departments of the institution, are so different in their nature, that the one could scarcely interfere with the other. Ascertaining the nature of a disease, advising a suitable medicine, and performing a needful operation, seem to bear no sort of relation to the appointment of servants, the procuring of furniture, the laying in of provisions, and defraying expences. But upon closer inspection, it will be found, that the most intimate relation subsists betwixt them: that the faculty must necessarily prescribe with a view to the character and manners of the servants, the nature of the provisions, and the state of the furniture and accommodations; and that the board, in all

their transactions, behove to have respect to the nature of the diseases which are admitted into the hospital, and to the prescriptions and plans of the faculty. Both are engaged, though in different capacities, in prosecuting the very same end; and each should employ means for promoting that end, which have an exact correspondence to those employed by the other. But if the several parts of a machine are furnished by two different makers, who have no common model to copy, and no knowledge of each other, it would be singular indeed if all of them were found to fit so accurately, that it had no irregularity or jarring in its movements. And if no conferences or communications are held betwixt the board and the faculty, would it not be equally singular if discordancy were never to be found betwixt their respective proceedings? It is obvious, that in order that the machine go smoothly and to purpose, they must act in concert, they must act together.

Medical practitioners, in the exercise of

their profession, are led to think of nothing but the distress of the patient. To them, every creature in suffering is an object of compassion and beneficence. Their attention is confined to the degree of his sufferings and of his danger; and all their concern is, by what means they may most speedily alleviate the one, and most certainly remove the other. — The trustees of an infirmary would naturally direct their attention to different views of the case: for example, how far such and such descriptions of persons were proper objects of charity; how far immorality may have occasioned their sufferings; what expence would be incurred by their cure; and what effect it might have upon themselves, and upon society, if their recovery were attended with no trouble or expence to themselves. — Thus the deliberations of the trustees, and those of the faculty, respect quite different topics. Each takes a partial view of the subject. And when their deliberations are separately conducted, it would be strange indeed if ever there should

be found an identity of result. But were they, on the other hand, to sit and reason together, the subject would be viewed in all its aspects and relations; the opinions of the one would be tempered by those of the other; and their final resolution would more certainly bear the stamp of wisdom.

Among individuals associated together there is naturally generated, not only a partiality for every member, but a particular sentiment of complacency towards the society at large. This sentiment, variously modified, according to particular circumstances, is denominated a corporation-spirit among citizens; clanishness among the members of a family, or the inhabitants of a district; party-spirit among factions; and patriotism among states. It is a sentiment replete with all the malignity of self-love, but rendered audacious by having borrowed somewhat of the garment of benevolence. The citizen will openly assert the franchises of his corporation, by means, the imputation of which, for maintaining his private rights, would suffuse his countenance with

shame. The statesman will be applauded by his country for pursuing a line of conduct, for which, in the humbler walks of life, he would be presented with a halter. Patriotism, in the common acceptation of the word, is not a virtue. Party-spirit is a vice: and with this latter the corporation-spirit, or spirit of an order, falls to be classed.

The zeal and activity by which this spirit manifests itself depend upon accidental circumstances; as the happiness to be derived from the connection; the largeness or smallness of the society; and the state of neighbouring rivals.

Now, the constitution of the hospital places the board and the faculty precisely in that relative situation, in which this sentiment cannot fail to spring up. Two independent bodies of men, holding separate councils upon the same subjects, must occasionally experience feelings of mutual jealousy. These feelings, having once got birth, are fostered by every occurrence. Dislike, animosity, con-

tentions ensue. Each order strives to exalt itself by bearing down its rival. The weekly board sits like a company of task-masters, concerting plans injurious to the honour and interest of the faculty; and the latter, at their meetings, are placed in the situation of a band of conspirators, plotting against the privileges and peace of the board. Every determination of the one is received by the other with distrust: they condemn it in their hearts, before they have comprehended it with their understandings.

The business of the Infirmary, in as far as it is to be distinguished from a work-house, is intirely in the hands of the faculty. The alterations and improvements, therefore, which, in the progress of things become expedient, must primarily occur to them. But, by the rules and the practice of the institution, before these can be proposed to the board, in order to be passed into a law, or carried into execution, they must be fully digested by the faculty as a body. Were the discussion to

take place in a conjoint meeting of the trustees and the faculty, their origin would be lost sight of in the general conversation; a communion of ideas would unavoidably follow; both parties would be insensibly led into the same train of thought; and step by step, would arrive together at the same final determination. But when the matter must not be presented to the board, till it has attained its perfect form, they feel as if they were taken by surprise. They are averse to enter into the consideration of it. If it is pertinaciously obtruded upon them, they strenuously set their faces against it. Every thing is done by collision; nothing by co-operation. The will of the board of course prevails. The faculty are displeased, offended, disgusted. Their zeal for the interests of the institution waxes cold; and the patients become the sufferers in the end.

I admit that the British lords and commons, in parliament assembled, consist of two distinct orders, holding deliberations upon the same subjects in separate assemblies;

and yet, that they experience none of those shocks and convulsions, which so agitate the Manchester Infirmary; which seems, upon a superficial glance, to be similarly constructed upon a smaller scale. The truth is, the house of commons contains many members who are the sons, and heirs of peers; and in the house of lords are to be found many who are commoners by birth, but who, from year to year, have been honoured with promotion. In the lower house, there are many who have the education, the feelings, and the prejudices of noblemen; as in the upper, there are many with the education, the sentiments, and the prejudices of commoners. In fact, either house contains both orders of the state; whereby their deliberations are duly tempered and modified in every stage of their progress. But were it otherwise, it requires no great sagacity to foresee, that their jealousies and contentions, about their respective privileges, would speedily raise such a conflagration, as would leave the nation in ruins.

Impressed with such considerations as these, certain members of the faculty did, a few years ago, enter their names as trustees to the Infirmary ;—but not with the happiest event. Whether the dæmon of schism had taken complete possession of some of the leaders in the administration; or whether they hesitated about the propriety of admitting a few of the faculty to the full exercise of privileges which were denied to the rest; certain it is, that the subscribing members were never cordially received into their bosom, or acknowledged as brethren. And the continuation of their subscriptions served only to keep up the awkward appearance of a libel on the liberality of the governors, who condescended to enrol them among their number in consideration of two guineas annually, as if their regular services, for three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, were of no value whatever.

Another source of variance, and which indeed arises out of the former, is an attempt on the part of the board to govern the faculty by

the exercise of authority. It is not enough that the duty be performed, unless it proceeds from a principle of obedience. They discountenance every spirit but that of servility; and keep ringing in their ears the sound of RESPONSIBILITY!

Of all the principles of action by which the public conduct of the faculty could be influenced, a regard to the authority of the board is the weakest and the worst. It is both insufficient of itself to answer any good purpose, and according to the present constitution of the hospital, it is impossible to be maintained.

One of the most powerful incitements to medical industry is that highest of all earthly luxuries, the luxury of relieving affliction in indigence. To restore the destitute labourer to the cheerful exercise of his wonted calling—to raise up the parent to the protection of an anxious dependant family — to dispel the anguish, and renew the enjoyments of them that were ready to perish — or, if restoration to health surpasses the art and powers of man, to

render life tolerable while it remains, and soften at last the pang of dissolution ;—these are employments which carry along with them their own reward.—The good man may be actuated by views and sentiments nobler still, prompting him to make beneficence his busisiness, and to shed kindness and mercy all around him. But plants like these refuse to flourish, save in the concealment of the shade: when exposed to observation, they wither and decay. And therefore in an institution, which requires not only that duties be performed, but that they be exhibited when performed, and displayed to the satisfaction of all who are concerned, its governors can only count upon them in as far as they may prove auxiliary and corroborant to other principles of action, which accord with the peculiar genius of such institution.

Among the foremost of these deserves to be ranked, a desire to possess the good opinion of our fellow-creatures. This is a principle distinct from vanity ; perfectly consistent

with virtue; and of the highest utility to society. In common life, it is despised by those only who are sunk in depravity; but it is the aim of the good, and is seldom or never denied where it is merited. In public life, when men engage in labours which are not their own, but which are intended and calculated for the benefit of others, they have a claim on those others for gratitude and favour; and it would be a violation of justice to withhold the expression of them. Yet, so grateful is that expression of esteem to the benevolent mind, that it operates, not merely as a debt extinguished, but as a reward conferred; and stimulates to farther, and more strenuous exertions.

Unfortunately for the Manchester Infirmary, such rewards and incitements are intirely unknown to it. By the rules, the forms, and the practice of the institution, the faculty are as much as possible kept out of view. In the form of the home-patient recommendations, for instance, instead of having one set addressed to the physicians, and another to

the surgeons, whereby much unnecessary trouble, confusion, and delay, would be avoided, the *trustees* address them to the *trustees*; and desire the patient may be visited by a physician or surgeon, as if these were domestics watching the nod of their masters. And this is the sum total of the correspondence betwixt the trustees and the faculty. No farther notice is taken of them. — Indeed, I had not been twelve months appointed to the Infirmary, when one of the trustees, whom I accidently met with in a private company, stated to me in substance as follows: "That the "trustees considered themselves as laid under "no obligation to the faculty for any ser- "vice they rendered: that the latter had soli- "cited their appointments, not with a view to "serve the public, but for their own private "ends, and therefore that the public were "not indebted to them; that the institution "had not suffered at all from the retirement "of Mr. White and his friends: that abund- "ance of young men would always be found

" ready to fill up any vacancies which might " take place; and, therefore, that the trus- " tees felt no necessity for paying the faculty " any attention whatever."— These things he threw out without any introductory remark either from himself or any of the rest of the company, farther than saying, " he supposed I was one of the physicians to the Infirmary." He uttered them in a tone by no means conciliatory; and he expressed himself as if they were not opinions and sentiments suggested at the moment, but the result of reflection, and conversation with his brethren. And that he had had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the mind of his brethren he afterwards gave me to understand, by hinting that he had been making himself a little busy in the politics of the Infirmary. — I do solemnly declare, that the transactions of the board ever since have appeared to me to be a comment on his words.

Neglect might be borne: but misrepresentation and abuse may surely serve any other

interest better than that of the patients. I disclaim the idea of imputing to any man moral impropriety. I presume not to scrutinize motives. I know that rumour exaggerates. And, therefore, whether it might be conceived to proceed from intention or thoughtlessness, I am not disposed to give credit to the report, that language, far from respectful, is habitually held in a quarter, where prudent reserve, at least, would be much more becoming.—But one thing cannot be denied, that those who have no opportunities of observing and judging for themselves, must be understood to derive their opinions from the representations of others, whom they consider as having access to know the truth. And if it be possible to collect the sense of the community, the impression made upon it unquestionably is that the faculty are designing, and restless, and seeking nothing so little as the good of the charity. And when these are thus lowered in the public estimation, surely it is not to be wondered at, that the cuckow vote of an-

nual thanks should draw forth from all, who are at the pains to attend to it, nothing else than a contemptuous sneer.

Another motive to diligence on the part of the faculty might be formed, by rendering that diligence subservient to their advantage. In the present imperfect state of our nature, a man never advances in the path of well-doing with more steady progress, than when his interest and his duty draw him in the same direction.—When a professional gentleman undertakes the duties of an Infirmary, he must lay his account with being put to some trouble and inconvenience; but he ought not to find that in proportion as he attends to its interests, he neglects his own. He must lay his account with giving away a portion of his time, and being, occasionally, out of the way of his business: but surely things might be ordered so as that he should not be a loser upon the whole.—It would be too much to assert, that the board is unwilling that the Manchester Infirmary should yield any return. But against

some of the public measures, which were agitated some time ago, it was, perhaps, too openly admitted as a weighty objection, that they might be of profit to the faculty. And the representations, which are kept in circulation abroad, are ill calculated to recommend them to the favourable notice of the public. — For my own part, I may almost go the length to say, that during these four years that I have been connected with the hospital, I have not through it formed one acquaintance, or gained one friend, or received one guinea.—I have drawn, it is true, a few paltry fees of one or two guineas each, from the Lunatic hospital. But for these, I have often had more trouble than a porter from the square would have taken for an equal sum. And I cannot help entertaining strong doubts, whether allowing those trifling fees really conduces to the interest of the hospital. It destroys those feelings of patronage, which one insensibly contracts in favour of an institution, which one is engaged in serving without fee or reward; and it does not

furnish an inducement to the discharge of the duty from the consideration of an adequate compensation.

An interest in the prosperity of the institution might be farther created by conferring upon the faculty a certain portion of influence in the affairs of the charity. A man never prosecutes an object with greater energy than when he can call the plans his own. The schemes of another, the wisdom and propriety of which he is disposed to question, he follows out with languor and indifference. But while he can look upon them as creatures of his own ingenuity, he exerts every talent, and strains every nerve, rather than be baffled in the execution of them. Accordingly, a wise master will not only consult with his servant, but sometimes prefer his suggestions to his own, although perhaps in themselves less expedient; knowing that thereby he converts the measure into the cause of his servant, whose heart becomes engaged, and his whole powers pledged for its ultimate success. But

such views and modes of administration form no part of the policy of the board of the Infirmary.—It would ill become me to descant in this place upon the sweetness of power: and the reluctance its possessor feels to share his honours, and divide his crown. But one thing is certain, that the town is somehow taught to believe, that admitting the faculty to have any influence in the councils of the Infirmary, involves considerations which ought to excite the most alarming apprehensions. It is somehow impressed with the idea that every movement of the faculty arises from turbulence; from a desire for the acquisition of power; the establishment of a medical board. And this serves as a pretext for checking and repressing them upon every occasion.— For these four years last past, I do not recollect one proposal made by the faculty which has not been past by, or set aside by the board.

It would be superfluous to illustrate the matter more diffusely: but every principle of action is industriously quashed, in order to

make way for their darling authority. And upon the present foundation of the hospital, it is impossible for them to support that authority. They have no hold of the faculty by which they might be enabled to enforce dutiful submission. The latter receive and expect nothing from them. They are as independent of the board, as the board is of them. And while they do not eat of their bread, why should they demean themselves as their servants?—In order that the board might attain its object, it ought to reduce them at once to the condition of menials, and repay them for their trouble with a suitable recompence. But when all that was done, the pride of a few individuals might indeed be gratified, but the charity would be profited nothing. Going through the formal routine of office, and rendering substantial benefit, are by no means one and the same. Such of the trustees as have had the misfortune to be visited with affliction must have remarked the behaviour of their faithful physician. They must have per-

ceived with what patient attention, what keen observation, what anxious enquiries, what careful discrimination, he judged of their complaints, and prescribed the remedies. And he will readily conceive how a hireling may rush hurriedly into a nasty apartment, and standing impatiently a few moments upon his legs, give a careless ear to one-half of an ill-told story, and forthwith write out his prescription, without contributing one iota to the benefit of the patient. But when he has done this, he has done all that authority can enforce. He has absolved every claim which his masters have on his obedience. And for the rest, principles are requisite which disdain even the board's thundering terrors of RESPONSIBILITY: principles, which gold is insufficient to purchase, or power to command; which authority may enfeeble, but cannot confirm; may extinguish, but cannot enkindle.

Another source of discord is the relation in which the faculty stand to the apothecary,

and to the physician's clerk. These are appointed as assistants to the former; to superintend the execution of their orders, and, in their absence, to act in their stead. And as all their time is required for the business of the hospital, they are allowed regular salaries; and therefore are completely in the situation of servants. When, in addition to these things, it is considered, that the faculty have the best opportunities of observing their professional conduct, and are fully qualified to judge of its merits, I cannot help being of opinion, that, for the good of the institution, they were intended originally to be subject to them. — As things actually stand, however, although they are necessarily, in one sense, the servants of the faculty, yet in no sense whatever are the latter their masters. Where their duty is plainly delineated by the express letter of the rules, it may be supposed that the faculty have no commands to lay upon them; but have only to look on as spectators of their spontaneous obedience. Should they,

however, happen to trespass, they are not at all amenable to those, who are thus looking on and witnessing their fault. But it may be readily conceived, that there now and then occur particular combinations of circumstances, which could not have been foreseen; and to meet which, no general rules could possibly have been framed. Against such cases as these, provision could only be made in the seasonable interposition of a proper living authority. But of every species and semblance of authority, the faculty are entirely divested. They cannot lay upon their own assistants and servants, a single injunction, or call them to account for any thing they commit or neglect. The vexation and trouble that sometimes arise from a state of things so disjointed, I shall not attempt to describe.

If the apothecary and the physician's clerk be men of discretion; or if, from good dispositions, or any other cause, they are desirous to live upon good terms with the faculty, all is well. Then,

"For forms of government let fools contest,
"Whate'er is best administered, is best."

But if it should happen that they are not of the happiest natural temper; or if, feeling their independence with respect to the faculty, they are disposed to act up to the spirit of that independence; or if they should happen to take a dislike to some particular physician or surgeon;— woe be to that man and his patients.

No doubt, the party aggrieved has a right to complain to the board. But it ought to be considered that the subject of complaint is only fit for the cognizance of medical men. — Besides, the offences, which are in most danger of being committed, constitute only the minutiæ in the transaction of business; which, however important in themselves, it is difficult to state so, as to preserve all the appearance of their real importance. Flagrant violations of medical duty would be fit subjects for a trial at Lancaster; or, at least, at the New Bayley, in Salford. But those I refer to are the *petites morales* in medicine; the violation of which, like that of those in common

life, however injurious to peace, and subversive of order, and detrimental to business, yet cannot furnish materials for an indictment, or be made the ground of a criminal prosecution. But farther,

In what character or capacity is the physician or surgeon to go to the board? If he appears as the official accuser, there is probably no other witness than himself; and therefore the trial cannot be proceeded in for want of evidence. If he appears as a witness, the patient, or any of his friends, would commonly be found little qualified to discharge the functions of public prosecutor. Nor would it contribute at all to the good order of the hospital, were the patients permitted to appear in such a consequential capacity against those whom they ought to look up to as their immediate masters. If he appears before the board in the double capacity of prosecutor and witness, his office, as plaintiff, will invalidate his testimony as witness, and will excite suspicion of a prejudiced mind, or at least of a secret wish

for the condemnation of the accused. If he is to report to the board as a spy and informer, it is to be hoped no physician or surgeon will ever stoop to an action so ignominious, and bordering so nearly on immorality. Or finally, if he repair to the board in the character of physician or surgeon to the Infirmary, merely in order to state in a general way his opinion of the demerit of the party offending, in the assurance that, without farther enquiry, but relying on his honour, his integrity, and his judgment, the board will immediately proceed against the accused in a manner agreeable to his recommendation, he will possibly find that the board instantly take alarm for their own power and authority, and that they are more disposed to curb and mortify the accuser, than to reprove in the accused that disorderly behaviour, of which the consequences may be most deplorable.

But although it were possible that redress might sometimes be had, what inducement has a physician or surgeon to sue for it? The

patients are no dependents of his: and is it not enough if he visits, and prescribes for them, without involving himself in the plague of a vexatious litigation? But after sentence has been passed in his favour, still he is a loser. By formally entering the lists with those, who ought to feel and behave in the hospital as his servants, he stoops beneath the dignity of his official station, and teaches them to regard him as being on an equality with themselves. And after this opinion is formed, with enmity rankling in their bosoms, on account of the affront they must conceive he has brought upon them, although they may find themselves compelled to render in future the ceremonious formality of external obsequiousness, they will not cherish sentiments of respect for him, nor give him that hearty and substantial co-operation which constitutes the value of their services.

Influenced by such considerations as these, I have inflexibly adhered to the resolution, never to carry to the board any complaint or

accusation against any of the servants of the hospital. Even when, from the seeming enormity of misbehaviour, I have been urged by some of my brethren to repair to the board, in the confident assurance of obtaining redress, I have always declared my persuasion, that redress from the board was impossible. For the same reasons, upon a late occasion, as soon as I heard that accusations had been preferred, without knowing or regarding the nature of them, I used all my influence with some of the surgeons to make them break off the prosecution. But as they could not prevail with me to accuse, so neither could I persuade them to desist; nor did they learn on what footing they stood, but in consequence of the most unfortunate experience.

Peace and prosperity will never be secured to the Infirmary, till authority is attached to the offices of physician and surgeon. Authority, not in order to punish, but to prevent inattention, and improper behaviour; to keep the first rudiments of them in continual check; or, if at any time they should offer to germi-

nate, to nip them in the bud, and prevent them from evolving into open action.

These appear to me to be the principal causes of that animosity and strife in which the Infirmary is continually embroiled. It is possible that in the representations I have given of their effects, their powers may be unduly magnified; and that others of great and extensive influence may be overlooked altogether. Be that as it may, it is high time for the trustees to search the matter to the bottom. For I can assure them, and I have access to know, that every quarrel, even the most trifling, wounds the charity in its vital parts.—Did all its consequences terminate upon the parties at variance; did it affect only their own little dignities, without extending its influence to a much wider range, I should join with the rest of the world in looking down upon it with pity. But dissentions sting the soul. They destroy those ideas and sentiments of honour, and respect ability, which might flow from the connection. And they mar the happiness which might attend the discharge of

those duties which that connection imposes. The attention of the parties is distracted; and in the heat of contention, they are more eager to gain the frivolous point in dispute, than to perform their proper, and important functions. The subject of contention engrosses the soul; it warps the judgment upon questions of a very different nature, and biasses the will in every transaction. And, finally, the disaffection, which, in a greater or less degree, must inevitably follow a mortifying defeat, tends little to keep alive that warmth of benevolence, which the welfare of the patients so imperiously requires.

A moment's reflection might satisfy any sensible man, that, since the faculty act without fee or reward, they ought to be treated with attention and kindness. The home-patient service is peculiarly irksome, and often exceedingly troublesome; and it deserves all the encouragement which the trustees have it in their power to hold out. For months in succession I have had upwards of ninety home-patients upon my hands at one time, every one

of whom would have required to be visited daily at their own habitations. That was plainly beyond the compass of any one man's ability. But taking any charge whatever of so great a multitude must obviously have been very laborious. But the service, from its nature, is not less disagreeable. Conceive a person searching from door to door, in an unpaved street, with an inaccurate direction in his hand, and wading through entries, among pig-styes and necessaries, and then descending into a noisome cellar, or mounting up into a garrat swarming with vermin, and there, amidst nastiness and stench, treating an infectious or loathsome disease. He surely must think that the trustees might vouchsafe to him their countenance and favour, without exposing themselves to any danger of being impeached for prodigality. But if, in the midst of these irksome and laborious engagements, he chances to recollect that, for all he does, no creature considers himself to be laid under any obligation; that he receives no credit from any one for any pains that he takes, any toil

he undergoes; but, on the contrary, that the whole must wear the ungracious appearance of being enforced by the sternness of authority; and that when he suggests any improvement in order to give effect to his labours, his motives are misrepresented, his character vilified, and his feelings outraged: what must be the effect upon his mind and his conduct? Who can be so weak as to imagine that the avowal of such doctrines on the part of the trustees, and much more, reducing them to practice, can tend to expedite the recovery of their sick labourers and dependents.—"But," say they, "he solicited the appointment to the Infir-"mary for his own ends; and, on that ac-"count, nobody is indebted to him."—Well, but if those ends are not answered, what then must be the consequence? As love begets love, so neglect engenders neglect. And if the board allow themselves to be governed by a system of selfishness, can the faculty be blamed if they look to themselves?

It is madness to fancy that the institution will prosper in proportion as the faculty are

depressed and degraded. It is even folly to imagine that their consequence can be annihilated.

For, the essential interests of the hospital are entirely in their hands; and, according to the languor or alacrity of their efforts, those interests are sunk or exalted. That in managing the secular concerns of the institution, the zeal of the board has no other bounds than the depth of their judgment, and the extent of their ability, is most certainly true. But after "adding new wards to one end of the In-" firmary, paving the yard and gateway, new " flagging the foot-path, and new gravelling " the garden walks, and raising the brick " wall next to Bath-street," * and doing every thing which it is possible to do within their own sphere of action; they have done nothing to the Infirmary, *as an Infirmary.* They have done no more than its own governors do for Cheetham's foundation; or the church-wardens and overseers do for the work-house:

* See the report of the state of the Infirmary, &c. from the 25th of June, 1802, to the 24th of June, 1803.

every thing on account of which it is entitled to the name of an Infirmary; every thing for which it was built, and for which it is supported, is left by them wholly untouched. — Those essential matters are necessarily entrusted to the faculty alone. And must not the importance of their functions unavoidably reflect a corresponding consequence on those who perform them? And must not the faculty be aware that this consequence necessarily attaches to their office, and to themselves? — And must they not be at all times ready to assert their reasonable claims to be treated with personal respect, and to have their opinions received with a certain portion of deference?

If, by admitting them to their proper place in the charity, to that rank which naturally pertains to their office, no other end were to be answered than the gratification of their vanity or pride, I should despise the measure most heartily. But, impressed as I am with the persuasion, that it is not only indispensably necessary for the maintenance of peace, but that it would contribute to the pre-

servation of valuable lives, such as now, perhaps, may be sometimes thrown away, I feel it incumbent upon me, as a lover of peace, as a friend to humanity, warmly to urge the trustees to take it into their consideration. — One thing I can affirm with confidence, that could they have gone round with me in my daily visitations for the last four years, and seen what I saw, and known what I knew, they would also desire what I desire, and would be as eager to promote, as I am to recommend it. It must indeed strike every person with surprise, to be told, that the physicians and surgeons, on whom the whole utility of the institution depends, are not invested with sufficient power to command, for a patient, so much as a cup of cold water. If it is not conceded at their desire, I acknowledge they have the privilege of complaining to the board. But several gentlemen, besides myself, must, ere now, be satisfied, that by lodging complaints matters will not be mended.

The evils which might accrue to the institution from remitting in that violence, by

which it is attempted to bear down the faculty below their natural level, I confess I am unable to conjecture. But whatever they might eventually be found to be, I cannot help thinking, that expedients might be devised for diminishing, if not for counteracting them. Many, very many of them, would be fully compensated by the numerous and important advantages which would result from the measure. Harmony, fellowship, communion of views and sentiments, unity of ends and designs, combination of efforts, and the alliance of those more powerful principles of action in the faculty, which at present the board so industriously, and so successfully suppress.—These surely are much more than enough to overbalance any harm that might ensue from abandoning an idle and fruitless struggle to maintain an useless, inefficacious authority.

I cannot help suspecting that the board is not altogether ignorant that all this is true. They say, in the preface to the annual report of June, 1803, "Their (the faculty's) re-"gular attendance, and their unremitted ex-

" ertions in a gratuitous manner, have been " more than could be expected." — Far be it from me to take advantage of an inaccurate expression. I know too the delicacy of making alterations in the language of a gentleman whom they have solicited to draw up the preface to their report. But after making every allowance, it must still be supposed, that that gentleman had received such instructions, as led him to the use of that expression; or, at least, that the board knew sufficient to justify them in giving it their sanction. Actuated by motives of generosity and benevolence; acquiring knowledge, experience, emolument; having the trustees as applauding spectators, and their own minds bearing an approving testimony; what sacrifices, what exertions, might not be expected! Then whence comes it that the expectations of the board are so low? whence the confession that " regular " attendance, and unremitted exertions have " been more than could be expected?"—Unquestionably they have a secret consciousness, that the treatment the faculty meet with is

sufficient to stem the force of every motive to diligence, and that there are thrown up in their way such discouragements and difficulties as can hardly fail to subdue their zeal, and paralyse their efforts.

Were I to take upon me to draw an outline of a plan, by which the great designs of the Infirmary might be most effectually answered, in a manner consistent with the privileges of the trustees, and the honour of the faculty, perhaps I should propose, that exclusive meetings of the physicians and surgeons, for the purposes of general business, be entirely abolished. Of the weekly boards these should not, cannot be members. But at those boards no general or important business ought ever to be transacted. For the dispatch of the weightier affairs of the charity a monthly meeting of the trustees ought to be instituted; and at that meeting, the faculty should have a right to be present, to speak, and to vote. — But a detail of the constitution, which the peace and the interests of the Infirmary demand, it would be premature, perhaps presumptuous in me at

present to attempt. The truth is, it would be too sanguine to expect any changes for a long time to come. The subject would require calm, serious, and mature consideration: and there is every reason to believe that the board is perfectly content with things as they are.—It consists with universal experience, that men become attached to particular systems and tenets, in proportion to the difficulties they have encountered in establishing and defending them. No wonder that the board should be wedded to a code of regulations which has cost them so dear. But could the trustees at large be prevailed upon to turn their attention to the subject, improvements might be got ready against better times. And when certain who are high in office, shall have proclaimed to the world the final consummation of resignations, of which, as yet, they have only announced the distant intention; they may possibly be succeeded by men of more moderate principles; who, warranted by the experience of their predecessors, and disposed to make cautious and judicious alterations, may ad-

vance the hospital to a pitch of perfection, which, upon the present system, is absolutely unattainable.

At the same time, it cannot be too strongly inculcated, that it is not a change of men that is wanted, but a change of system. It is to be expected of course that resignations will, from time to time, be procured among the faculty, in order to afford the board a temporary triumph; and that resignations will occasionally take place among the members of the board, when they happen to be wearied out with contention. But this will amount to no more than a change of combatants. It will scarcely produce even a suspension of hostilities. The seeds of animosity will speedily revive. The same battles will continue to be fought; the same disgusts to be excited in the breasts of the faculty; the same wretchedness to be hurled on the devoted patients. The contests, no doubt will be modified by the peculiar tempers and manners of those who are engaged in them, and by the circumstances of the times in which they happen. But so long

as the present rules are in force, and the present forms are observed, dissention will be handed down from generation to generation.

Before I conclude, I must claim the privilege of stating, in behalf of myself, that in what I have recommended, I am altogether disinterested. I have no aim at personal aggrandisement. If I know myself at all, ambition is scarcely to be found in the number of my vices and failings. And although all the power for which I plead, were, after mature deliberation, to be conferred, I have little prospect of ever having an opportunity of exerciseing it. The relation in which I at present stand to the Infirmary will not, in all probability, subsist much longer. But, while I remain in connection with it, it is my duty to desire its prosperity. And I know not how I can, with a fairer chance of success, promote the object of that desire, than by endeavouring to point out to the trustees those bars and obstacles by which it is opposed.

I am aware that many will be disposed to take offence at several things I have said ; and

particularly at the freedom with which I have animadverted on the conduct of the board. My apology is, that to please or displease is not my object; but solely to promote the welfare of the institution. In all that I have said for that purpose, my endeavours has been to set honesty and a good conscience before me; and every person must be sensible that, from the nature of the subject, that could only be done at the risk of offending. But I have felt myself entitled to be plain and explicit, because the community has been most unjustifiably betrayed into an opinion, that those endless contentions proceed altogether from some mysterious inherent turbulence in the medical faculty. And I have ventured boldly to ascribe to the board that share in their production, which, I believe, truly belongs to them; because, from whatever branches those apples of bitterness hang, they certainly have the power, provided they had the inclination, to lay the axe at the root of the tree.

To the gentlemen, who usually compose the board, I intend nothing personal. They are all of them strangers to me; but I most

sincerely believe, that in private life they are highly respectable, and well entitled to the confidence of the town.—But while I hold their private characters sacred, and even respected, I feel myself at perfect liberty to canvass their public conduct. And surely there can be no impropriety in avowing my decided conviction, that this is not conducive to the good of the charity. I am willing to give them credit for the best intentions, but they are misled by their prejudices, and their measures have most commonly an effect precisely opposite to that which they intended. For their zeal and activity, considered in themselves, they are entitled to high commendation. But it may be laid down as a maxim which very generally applies, that when men have imbibed improper principles, or act upon a wrong system, they are dangerous and injurious, in proportion to their zeal and activity.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your very obedient, & most humble servant,

JAMES JACKSON.

Manchester,
Nov. 17th, 1804.